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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

27 September 1984

LEBANON: The Hizb Allah

Summary

"Hizb Allah" (Party of God) is a generic term that refers to the pro-Iranian radical Shia movement in Lebanon. The movement is composed of a number of loosely-organized groups---most are based in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley---that use both terrorist and subversive political methods to accomplish their objectives. [redacted]

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The terrorist component, which often refers to itself as "Islamic Jihad" (Holy War), is determined to drive the US and Israel out of Lebanon and to establish an Islamic state there. This terrorist network, operating with Iranian assistance, almost certainly carried out the recent Embassy bombing as well as the Multinational Force bombings last October. Shia terrorism in Lebanon is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. [redacted]

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Structure, Size, and Leadership

The Hizb Allah movement is composed of several relatively small groups supported by Iran:

- **Islamic Amal:** Husayn Musawi withdrew from the mainline Amal movement---the moderate Shia grouping headed by Nabih Barri---and created this extremist organization in the Bekaa Valley in 1982. It is the most organized

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Levant Branch, Arab-Israeli Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, at the request of Robert McFarlane, the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Cutoff date for information is 27 September 1984. Questions and comments should be directed to Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, at

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radical Shia group. Its membership may number as many as 800-1,000.

- **Husayni Suicide Forces:** Another member of the Musawi family---Abu Haydar Musawi---leads this loosely-organized subgroup of Islamic Amal, which we believe recruits individuals for specific operations. Its varied membership fluctuates, but probably numbers fewer than 100 at any time. It appears to operate in both the Bekaa Valley and Beirut.
- **Muslim Students Union:** Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, a fundamentalist cleric in southern Beirut, controls this group, which we believe is intimately involved with the other radical Shia groups. The group has perhaps 300 members, but Fadlallah commands the respect and loyalty of far larger numbers of Shias. He probably sends promising candidates to the Bekaa Valley for training under Islamic Amal and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

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Background and Ideology

The Hizb Allah terrorists are driven by an Islamic fundamentalist ideology that is relentlessly hostile to the US and Israel. They are determined to drive the US and Israel out of Lebanon through terrorism directed against our personnel and installations. Radical leaders almost certainly viewed the withdrawal of the Marine contingent from Beirut last winter as proof of the effectiveness of terrorist tactics.

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The Shia extremists are also committed to the goal of establishing an Islamic republic in Lebanon through revolutionary means. They therefore intend to use violence to disrupt the Lebanese Government's attempts to implement a security plan for Beirut and the surrounding area

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The Iranian revolution, the death of their spiritual leader Imam Musa Sadr, and the Israeli invasion of predominantly-Shia southern Lebanon galvanized the Shias and set the stage for the emergence of radical groups prone to terrorism. Relatively few individuals belong to these organizations---perhaps fewer than 1,000---but they can operate effectively because Iran supports them and because they have the sympathy of a significant segment of the Lebanese Shia population.

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External Ties

Iran encourages and provides training and material support to the radical Shia groups based in the Bekaa Valley. The roughly 400-700 Iranian Revolutionary Guards there work closely with the radicals and almost certainly help plan specific terrorist operations.

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[REDACTED]

We have had some reporting that radical Palestinians provide the Hizb Allah with technical assistance in some terrorist operations, but we do not believe there is a major connection between the two groups. [REDACTED]

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Syria has allowed the radical Shias to operate from camps in Syrian-controlled eastern Lebanon, but it has begun to crack down on their freedom of movement since the latest bombing. Damascus currently supports efforts by the Lebanese Government to stabilize the security situation in Beirut and no longer welcomes disruptive Shia terrorism. We believe Syria also wants US assistance in ending the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and fears that such attacks will discourage the US from adopting a more active role. [REDACTED]

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The Most Recent Embassy Bombing

An overwhelming body of circumstantial evidence points to the Hizb Allah, operating with Iranian support under the cover name of Islamic Jihad.

-- [REDACTED] during the past year that this terrorist network was planning further operations against the US.

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-- Anonymous telephone callers in Beirut have warned several times this year that Islamic Jihad would attack US interests, and two callers have claimed responsibility for this bombing in the name of the organization.

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-- Radical Shias in Baalabakk have privately confirmed their group's responsibility for the bombing, [REDACTED] They said they were followers of Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah. [REDACTED] the driver of the van was an Iranian member of the Lebanese Hizb Allah.

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[REDACTED]

-- The method of attack strongly implicates the Hizb Allah. Suicide vehicle-bombs have been their principal trademark, and Shia fundamentalists are the only organized terrorists in Lebanon likely to willingly sacrifice their lives in such an attack.

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Hizb Allah Responsibility for Earlier Incidents

[REDACTED] the radical Shia network was probably behind a number of terrorist incidents in recent years, including the car-bombing of the US Embassy in April 1983, the car-bombings of US and French Multinational Force installations last October, the car-bombing of the Israeli military headquarters in Tyre last November, and a series of kidnappings throughout Lebanon this year. We believe Hizb Allah presently holds three Americans, including US Embassy officer William Buckley. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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